

GOOD AS GOLD

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY

K. McDOWELL RICE

Price, 25 Cents

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This is a *Royalty Play*, and terms must be made with the author for its use.

Good As Gold is a genuine bit of comedy fully deserving the success and popularity it has already received.

—Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge,
Editor St. Nicholas Magazine

GOOD AS GOLD*

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

By

K. McDOWELL RICE

Author of "A Successful Stratagem," "Mrs. Tubbs's Telegram,"
"Mrs. Bagg's Bargain Day," "Charley's Country
Cousin," "Uncle Joe's Jewel," &c., &c.

Dramatis Personae

MRS. ROGERS.

MARIE,	}	daughters of Mrs. Rogers.
HESTER,			
DOROTHY,			
THEODORA,			

MRS. LAURA VOSE, . . . sister of Mrs. Rogers.

MISS LUCINDA PHELPS, . . distant cousin of Mrs. Rogers.

ROSA, . . . the maid.

JANET,	}	little school girls.
ISABEL,			

BAGGAGE MAN.

MUSICIANS.

Time—the present.

Place—New England village.

Costumes—modern.

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GOOD AS GOLD

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*Sitting room at MRS. ROGERS'. A country house in New England village. MARIE listlessly dusting. HESTER in dreamy attitude in easy chair with a book. THEODORA crocheting.*

COSTUMES of the present day. MRS. ROGERS in traveling dress. Others, house dresses.

Enter MRS. ROGERS and DOROTHY.

MRS. R. [*Buttoning her gloves nervously*] Here it is nine o'clock and the letters not come! I am afraid I'll miss the train if I wait longer. But if a letter should come from cousin Lucinda, you may as well open it. It will probably tell what day she's coming. Will you help me with this, Dorothy? [*D. buttons MRS. R's gloves, rearranges veil and gives finishing touches*]

HESTER. [*Drawling*] Are you entirely packed, mamma? Is there nothing I can do?

MRS. R. My trunk has been gone this half hour, my dear. Is my bonnet quite right, Dorothy? [*Goes toward glass*]

MARIE. Did you remember to put in your little worsted cape, mother?

MRS. R. There, that's the very thing I've forgotten! [*Starts to get it*]

DOROTHY. I packed that, mother. You'll find it in the large compartment of the tray.

22 Feb 5 1898

Genesee, 15 Nov 44
Franklin

MRS. R. Oh, did you, Dorothy dear, how thoughtful! Thank you so much too for basting in all those ruchings for me and for everything you've done. Good-by, my dear, [*Kissing her*] I suppose I may as well be on my way. [*Starts to say good-by to the others*]

Enter ROSA.

ROSA. The letters, miss. [*To THEODORA, who takes them*] [*Exit*]

MRS. R. I may have time after all. Open them for me, Theo. Cousin Lucinda's first. [*Takes letter and runs eye rapidly over it*] What! Wednesday? Why, that's to-day. She is coming to-day on the 3.10!

THEO. You don't say so!

MARIE. How unfortunate!

HESTER. It is so awkward to have people come that one has never seen. But I suppose that you could not wait over, mother?

DOROTHY. Why, of course not, Hester. The anniversary is to-night, you know. And as for cousin Lucinda, I'm sure we feel as though we quite knew her; we've always heard so much about her. The only thing is that she will be so disappointed not to find you here, mother.

MRS. R. [*Who has opened a second letter*] And Laura is coming, too!

HESTER. Aunt Laura!

THEO. Coming here!

MARIE. When?

DOROTHY. With cousin Lucinda?

MRS. R. I dare not wait any longer. Read the letters for yourselves, girls. [*Hands letters to HESTER*] If I have time at the station I may leave a line to be handed them explaining why I had to be away. Now, make it as pleasant for them as you can. Good-by, good-by. [*Kissing one after the other*] Don't expect any letter, for I shall be back so soon. [*Exit*]

HESTER. [*From the window, where she has been waving handkerchief*] Mother seems to be motioning for something.

DOROTHY. Her satchel! [*Takes it and runs out*]

Re-enter DOROTHY.

MARIE. Now, let's all enjoy these letters. To think of aunt Laura's coming! I thought she was going abroad about now.

THEO. Another person we've never seen, or rather don't remember. But [*To HESTER who is reading letter*] what are you looking so surprised about? [*Hastens to look over H's shoulder and gives an exclamation of surprise, at which M. reaches for letter and she and D. read*]

MARIE. [*Reads*] "I want to form my own opinion of my nieces and think it better to see them in their own home than invite them to visit me. I do this, my dear Sarah, with a view to taking one or more of them abroad with me this summer." [*Listeners make various exclamations of delight*] Wait a minute; hear this. [*Reads*] "But not a word to them, Sally. I know I can trust you."

DOROTHY. [*Putting her hand over the page*] Why, we ought not to be reading this at all.

THEO. Well, it cannot be helped now.

MARIE. And mother told us to read it.

HESTER. Besides, the mischief is done, and we've all an equal chance to get into aunt Laura's good graces. Do let's read it again.

DOROTHY. [*Reflecting*] They come in on the 3.10.

HESTER. [*Dropping letter*] *They!*

DOROTHY. Why, yes, cousin Lucinda comes too.

HESTER. [*In relieved tone*] Oh, yes, of course. But you don't know what a fright you gave me. I thought aunt Laura might be going to bring a maid.

THEO. It is well for the maid that she is not. Where, by the way, is cousin Lucinda to go?

DOROTHY. Why, her room has been ready since Monday.

THEO. The blue room! Aunt Laura must have that.

MARIE. Of course.

DOROTHY. Why aunt Laura any more than cousin Lucinda?

HESTER. Now don't be foolish, Dorothy. Aunt Laura is used to all sorts of elegance and must have the best room, of course. Don't you say so, girls?

MARIE. Why, of course.

THEO. Besides, mother has often told us what a hard time the Phelps have always had to get along, and you may be sure cousin Lucinda will be satisfied with anything.

DOROTHY. What is 'anything' may I ask?

THEO. Why, the hall bedroom.

MARIE. Yes, we can put that in order very nicely.

HESTER. Very nicely indeed.

DOROTHY. She shall have my room first.

HESTER. Your room! O, Dorothy, yours is the prettiest room in the house! You're always at work on it. If that's to be given up, let aunt Laura have it. Pink is so much more dainty than blue.

THEO. Yes, Dorothy, mark my words. You'll be going abroad this summer just as certain as aunt Laura has that room.

DOROTHY. [*Laughing*] I don't think I care to go on the strength of my room. But aunt Laura may see it whenever she cares to pay a call on cousin Lucinda.

HESTER. Humph! *She'll* never appreciate it. Like enough pink looks yellow to her. But now aunt Laura—

DOROTHY. There's no need talking about it. I'm going up now to sweep and dust and clean and put the room in its finest order for—[*Appears to hesitate*—]for—

CHORUS. Aunt Laura. O, Dorothy, *do, do!*

DOROTHY. Cousin Lucinda.

MARIE. And where will you go?

DOROTHY. Oh, we can arrange the hall bedroom, you know, very nicely indeed. [*Exit, laughing*]

MARIE. "If she will, she will,
You may depend on't,
If she won't, she won't,
And there's an end on't."

But she shall room with me if she will. Dorothy is good as gold.

HESTER. I would offer my room, but I couldn't put it in order in less than a week. Besides, it's so inconvenient to lug one's things out, and they always get in such a mess. I should certainly be late for meals and that might be the very thing to nip my going abroad right in the bud. People traveling, you know, are so on time.

MARIE. [*Naïvely*] Then you think of going?

HESTER. I don't hesitate to say that I intend making myself as agreeable to aunt Laura as I know how.

MARIE. [*Sighing*] I'll have to depend on my music. I never was much on general conversation. I suppose aunt Laura has heard the first masters and dotes on the severely classical.

THEO. More likely she does not understand them at all, but would run right down to New York and engage you a state-room on the next steamer bound for Europe if you knew how to play "Money-Musk."

MARIE. [*Laughing*] "Many a true word spoken in jest." When I'm down in the village this morning I'll try to get some of that music of *ye olden tyme*. Give me another hint, Theo. [*Sits herself and writes*] I've put "Money-Musk." Now what?

THEO. "Soldiers' Joy" and "Fishers' Hornpipe."

MARIE. Splendid! [*Writes*] Anything else?

THEO. [*Considering*] "Irish Washerwoman!"

MARIE. That caps the climax! So jiggy! That's a very good list, [*Regarding paper*] thanks to you, Theo. [*Takes her hat from sofa*] Good-by, I'm off!

HESTER. Which steamer?

MARIE. [*Laughing*] Oh, I don't care, so long as I bring back my sisters a plentiful supply of gloves and Roman sashes. [*Exit*]

HESTER. I wish *I* had a specialty.

THEO. Why, you have; you can talk books to a charm. But let me give you the same advice I did Marie. Don't be too modern. Can't you be the old-fashioned girl? Assume the fichu style of dress and—

HESTER. A fichu! Why, I was always a fright in a fichu, Theo; you know that.

THEO. Well, be bookish then without it. But if aunt Laura should go into your room—

HESTER. [*With uplifted hands*] Of which I hope I'll have due warning.

THEO. Should she go into your room and see all those trashy novels—

HESTER. Not another word. I understand. I'll tuck them all in my closet.

THEO. In your closet? Impossible! You couldn't shut the door this morning.

HESTER. [*At the book-case*] Here are the very things! "Six Months in Italy" and "Pen Pictures of Europe." One can travel to much better advantage after having read of foreign places.

THEO. You—ah—intend going abroad?

HESTER. Yes—ah—allow me to meet you—let me see where [*Opens one of the books*] ah, yes, at the Fountain of Trévi.

THEO. Well, if you should happen to want to meet me before that, you'll find me in the kitchen. If Dorothy's going to give up the morning to cleaning, I'll have to get up something dainty for supper, I suppose. Do you know I've a mind, while aunt Laura is here, to concoct all sorts of messes *à la Française*. Now, that is not a bad idea, is it? Perhaps aunt Laura's heart is one of those to which the way lies through the mouth. Yes, that's the very thing I shall do and if I find myself in the old world before long, I shall feel in duty bound to send the author of our cook book something unique.

HESTER. [*Coming forward with her arms full of books*] We must be sure and tell aunt Laura about your silk quilt taking the prize at the county fair. [*Drops book on sofa and comes toward THEO.*] Your domestic turn of mind, my dear, [*Assumes stilted tone, supposed to be voice of AUNT LAURA*] does you great credit. Allow me to present you with a key to your cabin on the*—— [*Catches up something as key which she hands THEO., who takes it and falls on her knees*]

THEO. Ma chère tante, je vous remercie. And now may I ask: Avez-vous le pain?

Enter DOROTHY, with broom in hand.

HESTER. J'ai le pain.

THEO. Avez-vous le bon pain?

HESTER. J'ai le bon pain.

THEO. Qui a le pain?

HESTER. Le boulanger a le pain.

DOROTHY. [*Joining in merriment*] What is this?

HESTER. [*Assisting THEO. to rise*] A sample of our mastery of the French language. Give us your blessing, Dorothy! [*They sink side by side into a large chair and DOROTHY holds her broom just above their heads*]

CURTAIN.

* Mention name of latest ocean steamer.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—*Railroad station at Worthdale. Baggage porter wheeling very large modern trunk, covered with foreign and other posters, and a small old-fashioned one, tied up with ropes. "Waiting-room" over door at rear, blackboard and various notices about, show that action takes place outside.*

COSTUMES.—MRS. VOSE, *rich traveling dress, dainty hand-bag, parasol, &c.* MISS PHELPS, *plain cambric dress, old-fashioned sacque, large antiquated bonnet with veil, short lisle-thread gloves, old-fashioned parasol, carpet hand-bag, band-box papered with large pattern wall-paper, bird-cage with paper about same, large bouquet of rural looking flowers with newspaper about stems.*

Enter MRS. LAURA VOSE and MISS LUCINDA PHELPS.

MRS. VOSE. [*To baggage porter, designating large trunk*] You may send this to Mrs. Rogers' on Maple Hill.

MISS PHELPS. [*Catching name of ROGERS, and seeing "L. W. VOSE" on trunk*] Vose! Laura! Can it be possible? Laura Vose! [*Porter retires to rear*]

MRS. V. [*Equally astonished*] Why, Lucinda Phelps! [*They fall into each other's arms, MISS P. with bird-cage, &c., still in hand*] What an age since we've met!

MISS P. And you are going to Sarah's too? How delightful!

MRS. V. They know you are coming? So they do that I am. Strange [*Looking about*] that there is no one here to meet us.

PORTER [*Who has been eyeing them from a distance*] [*Aside*] I'll give it [*Holding up note*] to the one that looks most likely to have a quarter handy. [*Comes forward to MRS. V., touching hat*] I was to give this to Mrs. Rogers' friends.

MRS. V. [*Taking note*] Thank you. [*To MISS P.*] There will probably be some explanation here. [*Opens note, while MISS P. disposes of her various belongings on top of trunks*]

PORTER. [*Aside, shrugging shoulders*] Fees is mighty onsartin! [*Goes to rear and is occupied with blackboard*]

MRS. V. [*Coming forward alone and reading note*] How like Sarah! Didn't half read my letter, and has left it with those

girls. The very thing of all things I didn't want her to do. Now my whole plan is overturned. Overturned completely. Isn't it too annoying for words? [*Pauses*] But wait, an idea strikes me. [*Goes to rear*] [*To porter*] Did Mrs. Rogers write this note after coming to the station?

PORTER. [*With deference*] She did, ma'am. I got her some paper at the office and loaned her a pencil of me own, ma'am.

MRS. V. [*Noticing blackboard*] What is this? "Trains East changed to-day." How are they changed?

PORTER. They're a half-hour earlier, ma'am.

MRS. V. Did we get in early?

PORTER. A half-hour earlier, ma'am, than if ye'd come yister-day. We go by midsummer schedule to-day and affther.

MRS. V. That explains, then, why our friends are not here to meet us. They probably do not know of the change. [*Hastens toward MISS P., who is chirruping to her bird and engrossed with her possessions generally*] Is not that the best of news? The trains are changed to-day! [*MISS P. gazes wonderingly at the information*]

PORTER. [*Aside*] Strange if it's the bist of news that it isn't considered worth something. But [*Shaking his head*] fees is mighty onsartin. [*Exit*]

MRS. V. Lucinda, we're about of a size?

MISS P. [*Wonderingly*] Yes, I should think we were.

MRS. V. Do you think you could wear my things?

MISS P. Wear your things? Why, yes, I should think I could.

MRS. V. Then, Lucinda, *do* humor me. How lately have you seen Sarah's daughters?

MISS P. Not for years. They were the merest children.

MRS. V. [*Enthusiastically*] Nor have I! Nothing could be better! You were full of fun enough as a school girl, Lucinda. Nothing could have suited you better some twenty odd years ago than this little plan of mine. I only hope you'll fall in with it now.

MISS P. [*Laughing*] I'm glad there's anything so definite as a plan in your mind. You forget that I'm still in the dark.

MRS. V. Let me tell you then as quickly as possible. [*Both come forward*] I wrote Sarah that I wanted to see my nieces in their own home to form my own opinion of them, having in mind

the taking abroad of one or more of them with me on my next trip. *They*, mind you, were not to know of this. But what does Sarah do, but just glance at the first part of the letter, in which I said I was coming to-day, and then in the flurry of setting out on a journey she leaves my letter with those girls!

MISS P. What a blunder!

MRS. V. A blunder? I should say so! The worst sort of a blunder. But even so, it's all going to work even better now, if anything, than my first plan. Listen:—*You*, my dear Lucinda, are to become *me*, and *I* am to become *you*. Now, don't object until you hear me out. There is a little hotel across the way. You and I can go over there, change our gowns and bonnets, or more properly, *exchange* them; I take your baggage and things and become "Cousin Lucinda"; you take mine and become "Aunt Laura." [Miss P. *nods approvingly as scheme is unfolded*] They'll have their little game and we'll have ours. [Enter porter] We must be back here [Consulting watch] in fifteen minutes. [To porter] Will you take charge of these things until we return?

PORTER. I will, ma'am.*

Exeunt MRS. V. and MISS P. in haste.

[Enter band of strolling musicians in Italian or other costume, who play and sing. As they prepare to move on enter MRS. V. and MISS P. MRS. VOSE, now in MISS PHELPS' dress, gives generously to all the musicians.]

PORTER. [Aside] Oh, ho! Fees may not be so onsertin afther all. [Advances toward MRS. V., touching hat] I brought your things over here, ma'am.

MRS. V. Thank you very much for all your trouble. [Hands him a crisp dollar bill]

[Porter, having expressed thanks, folds bill in the middle, making a square of it, which he holds up admiringly]

PORTER. [Aside]. Well, this is what might be called doing the square thing. I looked for a quarter, but it seems I didn't look in the *right* quarter! Well, well, "Fine feathers do not make fine birds." [Designating with a nod the better dressed woman as he makes exit]

* See note A.

MRS. V. [*To Miss P., who is struggling with strange bonnet*] I never should have believed that dress could so change one. Let me help you. There! Why, the change is something marvelous. Now, Lucinda, I charge you; *don't forget*.

MISS P. But you are forgetting already in calling me "Lucinda."

MRS. V. How stupid of me! That is my name now, isn't it? Dear me, [*Laughing*] do I look as successfully *you*, I wonder, as you do *me*?

MISS P. You! Why, you are laughably perfect. Can you ever take charge of all those things?

MRS. V. The more of them the better. [*Aside*] These will prove an excellent test of the quality of my nieces!

MISS P. The twenty odd years ago you spoke of, I might have gone through this with a straight face. But I'm not so sure of myself now.

MRS. V. Don't you fail, Lucinda—I mean Laura. I shall never forgive you if you do. Now, we must arrange as to money. [*They exchange purses*] How do you open this?

MISS P. And how do you ever get into this? [*Both hurriedly explain*]

MRS. V. You will find, too, a roll of bills in the side pocket of that bag and you must give the girls as good a time as you know how. Have carriages every day and carry out any form of entertainment that suggests itself to you. Don't let money stand in the way. There are gifts for each in the tray of my trunk. Fortunately, I have marked them all with their names. Now, let me see,—is there anything else we ought to arrange, I wonder? If our rooms are not near together, we may not have a chance to consult right away.

MISS P. I'm all of a tremble. I don't feel at all at home in this costume. [*Gasps*] Can I ever get out of it, do you think!

MRS. V. Oh, yes, indeed. It all comes apart as easily as can be. A few hooks here, a few there. [*Explains further intricacies of waist, &c.*] As for me, I shall enjoy your cool cambrics. On the whole, I believe I'm getting the best of the bargain. But here come some fresh young faces! Yes, these must be Sarah's daughters. Now, we must appear to have just arrived, satchels in hand. Give me your check and I can be attending to the trunks.

[*They look about as though they had just come, and are disposing of their belongings on seats near waiting-room, when enter four girls: HESTER first, a moment later THEODORA, then MARIE and DOROTHY. The first three surround her whom they consider AUNT LAURA, welcoming her most enthusiastically; while DOROTHY steps beyond and takes the assumed COUSIN LUCINDA by the hand, kissing her affectionately, and lingering to talk with her.*]

[*MRS. VOSE and MISS PHELPS will hereafter be designated by the character each has assumed.*]

HESTER. Oh, aunt Laura, [*Hastening across to greet her*] how do you do?

AUNT L. [*Kissing her*] This must be Hester?

HESTER. Yes, it is, and I'm so delighted to see you, aunt Laura.

AUNT L. And this is—? [*As THEODORA greets her*]

THEO. Theodora.

AUNT L. Ah, yes, Theodora. How do you do, my dear? [*Kissing her*]

MARIE. And I'm Marie.

AUNT L. [*Kissing her*] How lovely of you all to come and meet me! And how is your mother?

MARIE. Mother's away, aunt Laura. She went this morning.

AUNT L. Gone away!

HESTER. Yes, but coming back in a day or two, aunt Laura.

THEO. Now we must take aunt Laura right home; mustn't we, girls?

MARIE. But how about your baggage, Auntie?

AUNT L. I have given the check to cousin Lucinda. [*At mention of COUSIN LUCINDA'S name, all look in that direction, where DOROTHY also is*]

THEO. [*Calling across*] How do you do, cousin Lucinda? [*Nods pleasantly, as does MARIE*]

[*HESTER goes perfunctorily to shake hands. DOROTHY comes toward AUNT LAURA. After an exchange of greetings, DOROTHY returns to COUSIN LUCINDA, while others go off surrounding AUNT LAURA, and all gaily chatting*]

MARIE. [*Waving her hand to COUSIN LUCINDA as they go*] Glad to see you, cousin Lucinda. [*Exeunt*]

COUSIN LUCINDA and DOROTHY come forward.

COUSIN L. I thought I'd bring you some flowers [*Handing same to D.*] though like enough you've got them all in your own garden.

DOROTHY. How very kind of you, and how beautifully they have kept on your long journey! No, [*Examining flowers*] we haven't all of these, I am sure. And you have brought your bird, too! [*Peeping inside paper*] What a dear little fellow! We've the sunniest window for him in the room you are to have. Mother was so sorry not to be home, cousin Lucinda, to greet you. But she had promised cousin Ezekiel a long time ago to come to his tin wedding, and they are going to have it this very evening. But mother will be back in a few days, and you know we are counting on a good long visit, cousin Lucinda. It is so many many years since you have been to see us.

COUSIN L. I remember you were a mere baby. But where [*Looking about*] are the others gone?

DOROTHY. I think they must have walked on with aunt Laura.

COUSIN L. [*Aside*] Walked on with aunt Laura!

DOROTHY. Yes, there they are! [*Looks in direction they have departed*] But you'll see them all at the house, and you'll have to get acquainted with us one by one, cousin Lucinda.

COUSIN L. I don't suppose any of you remember me?

DOROTHY. No, to be frank with you, we shouldn't any of us have known either you or aunt Laura. And now, shall I take your check, cousin Lucinda?

COUSIN L. Cousin Laura has given me hers, too, so you can attend to having both trunks sent up. [*Hands check to D., who goes toward porter, who is profuse in his attentions*]

DOROTHY. He says your bag can go right up with the trunks, cousin Lucinda.

COUSIN L. [*In consternation*] My handbag! Why, I wouldn't let it out of my hands for the world. Somebody would be sure to set a trunk right on it. I've some geranium slips in it for your mother.

DOROTHY. [*Kindly*] You won't mind letting it out of your hands into mine, I'm sure. Now, if I take this and the flowers, that will leave you the bird and—

COUSIN L. My parasol and box.

DOROTHY. [*Unruffled*] Oh, yes, and the box.

PORTER. [*Catching up bandbox*] I can send the box right up with the trunks, ma'am. [*Swings it in the air as he starts*]

COUSIN L. My bandbox! [*Runs and secures same*]

DOROTHY. Suppose I were to take the box and the bag, and you take your parasol and flowers this way in one hand, and the bird in the other. There, that's a very good arrangement, I'm sure. Now we'll start on. It isn't very far to the house, as perhaps you remember.

COUSIN L. Do you know, Dorothy, I begin to feel already the chill of this mountain air. There's a silk cape in that bag, if you don't mind getting it.

DOROTHY. [*Cheerfully opening bag*] Yes, indeed, you must be careful, cousin Lucinda. Everybody speaks of its being so cool here among the hills.

COUSIN L. [*Watching anxiously*] Be keerful of them geranium slips!

DOROTHY. [*Takes out old-fashioned silk wrap, which she puts about COUSIN L's shoulders, then picks up the box and bag*] Now we're quite ready, I'm sure. And, as I was saying, it isn't far to the house, as perhaps you remember. [*Exeunt*]

PORTER. [*Takes out bill and looks after retreating form of donor*] Strange woman, that! But still a woman of sense. Cents? Oh, a hundred times, yes! [*Nods knowingly, pockets money, and starts to wheel out trunks*]

CURTAIN

See notes B, C and D.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—*Sitting-room at ROGERS'. Morning after arrival of guests. THEODORA and HESTER sitting near AUNT LAURA. COUSIN LUCINDA and DOROTHY in opposite part of room; former knitting stocking, in which DOROTHY is taking much interest.*

COSTUMES.—AUNT LAURA, *rich morning gown, head-dress, etc.*
COUSIN LUCINDA, *quaint dress, hair combed low over ears.*
Others, *house dresses.*

HESTER. And now, aunt Laura, how would you like to spend the morning?

AUNT L. My dear Hester, don't worry at all about me, I beg of you. I should really enjoy just sitting here with you girls all day. But as the weather is so glorious, I'm going to propose a drive. [HESTER rises] No, not a word, you are not to send for anything. I ordered from the livery a carriage this morning to be here at ten o'clock, adding that if it were satisfactory you would like it every day for a week.

HESTER. How perfectly lovely of you, aunt Laura!

THEO. How perfectly lovely!

AUNT L. Now, which drive is prettiest?

HESTER. The Stony Brook road is the favorite, I think.

THEO. Yes, or the Old Bridge.

HESTER. That is lovely, I confess. [Hears MARIE'S voice] Let's ask Marie. [Starts to go, but is motioned back to her seat by AUNT L.]

MARIE is heard in the distance singing "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" THEODORA, noticing AUNT L's enjoyment of the music, nods knowingly to HESTER]

AUNT L. [As music ceases] I didn't want you to interrupt her, Hester. How beautifully she sings! Those old-fashioned airs always appeal to me. Does she know "Oft in the Stilly Night," I wonder?

THEO. I'll go see. [Aside] [Holding up her hands in great concern as she goes out] Why didn't I think of that!

Enter THEO. and MARIE.

THEO. Marie doesn't know that song you speak of, aunt Laura.

MARIE. But I can get it and learn it for you, auntie.

AUNT L. I should so like to hear it again. You have a lovely voice, my dear. But [*Looking out of window*] here comes our carriage! Now, what road do you think the prettiest for a drive this morning, Marie?

MARIE. [*Running to window*] Are we all going to drive? How lovely! Oh, let's go around the Falls, by all means!

AUNT L. [*Laughing*] At this rate it looks as though there would be enough drives to last us the week out. Where would you prefer, Dorothy?

DOROTHY. Thank you, aunt Laura, I hardly think I'll go this morning. You will go, cousin Lucinda?

AUNT L. Oh, yes, cousin Lucinda will go.

COUSIN L. Thank you, cousin Laura, I think I will not go to-day.

AUNT L. Well, we cannot spend our time urging people who do not appreciate this gorgeous weather for driving, can we, girls? Come then, we four will set out.

[*Exeunt AUNT L. with M., T. and H.*]

Enter HESTER, with hat on, in great haste.

HESTER. Oh, Dorothy, where are my gloves? Those new ones with the long wrists, you know.

DOROTHY. I think I remember seeing them about somewhere and putting them in your glove box.

HESTER. My glove box! Why, I never keep my gloves in my glove box! [*Exit hastily*]

Enter THEO., ready for drive.

THEO. Dorothy, have you seen that little thin gray veil of mine?

DOROTHY. Yes, you'll find it pinned inside your gray hat.

THEO. Up-stairs! Dear me, I hope I'll have time to get it!

[*Exit in haste*]

Enter MARIE, drawing on gloves.

MARIE. Oh, Dorothy, have you seen anything of my black hat? If I'm not ready they'll say they always have to wait for me!

DOROTHY. Isn't it right on the hall rack?

MARIE. Perhaps so, I haven't looked there. Thank you, Dorothy, dear, you always know everything. [*Exit in haste*]

[*Voices are heard calling "Good-by Dorothy"*]

DOROTHY. Good-by, good-by! [*Runs to window and waves party off*] Now, cousin Lucinda, we are left to a cosy morning by ourselves, aren't we? But, as the morning is my busy time, I cannot be here so very much. Let me see—oh, yes, first we want to wind that yarn, don't we? I'll get the old yarn-winder. It's an old-fashioned thing, as you'll see. People often send for it to use in tableaux and plays. [*Talking as she crosses room*] Mother says many's the time she and Aunt Laura wound their yarn on it, in the old days. [*Exit*]

Enter DOROTHY with old-fashioned wooden winder, which she places in front of COUSIN L., who appears much moved at sight of it.

DOROTHY. There, isn't that an old-fashioned thing?

COUSIN L. [*Forgetting her rôle*] The dear old thing! [*Turns top around*] Indeed, I remember it well. Yes, I knew I should find it there! [*Delightedly*] My letter, L. See it, Dorothy! [*Points out same*]

DOROTHY. [*In amazement*] Your letter? Why, mother always told us that was aunt Laura's letter. And that a boy lover of hers carved it there—Joshua Whiting—and that he put his right under. Don't you see them both, L. and J? [*Points out same*]

COUSIN L. [*Getting herself together*] Oh, yes, that must be Laura's letter, after all. But some way I had an idea that once when I was visiting the girls—visiting Laura, you know—your aunt Laura and Sarah—Sally we always called her—Sally was your mother, you know—I had an idea that Joshua Whiting carved an L. for me, too—L. for Lucinda, you know. [*Both look carefully over winder*]

DOROTHY. Then you knew Joshua, did you? Oh, do tell me something about him! [*Drawing up a chair*] There has always

been a sort of mystery about it all to us girls. Mother looks at those two letters and sighs, and sometimes begins to tell us about the old days, but always leaves off when it gets the most interesting. Just tell me one thing. [*Entreatingly*] Did aunt Laura ever care for Joshua Whiting?

COUSIN L. [*Much agitated*] Care for him! Care for him! Why, Dorothy, I loved him.

DOROTHY. You loved him! Oh, cousin Lucinda, was that the reason aunt Laura never married him?

COUSIN L. [*Staggered by her blunder*] Oh, Dorothy, some day I'll tell you all about it. Don't ask me now. This [*Laying her hand on winder*] has called up so many memories, I hardly know what I've been saying.

DOROTHY. [*Kneeling by C. L.'s side*] Forgive me, cousin Lucinda, for asking too pointed questions. But I did not know you were in the affair at all. [*Rises, bends tenderly over C. L., and assists her with yarn as she talks*] And you need not think that you must tell me about it all, just because you've happened to say something. We'll forget all about it. There [*Turning top of winder*] that seems to be all right. And now I'll have to leave you for a while, cousin Lucinda. But if you want me, just call, for I'm sure to be within hearing. [*Exit*]

COUSIN L. [*Watches DOROTHY safely out, then rises and goes toward mirror*] Now didn't you nearly make a fine ending of your own plan, woman? [*Addressing herself in glass*] Do you know who you are? You think you are Laura Vose. But you're not. You're Lucinda Phelps! Perhaps, Lucinda, you'd like to hear your own history a little, and impress it on your mind, so that you won't be giving people the impression that you think you're Laura Vose. Lucinda Phelps [*Shakes finger impressively at herself*] you had a quiet childhood—[*Enter DOROTHY.*]

DOROTHY. [*Glancing about room*] Are you alone, cousin Lucinda? I thought I heard some one talking with you.

COUSIN L. No, I was talking to myself. [*Appears to have been consulting mirror*] Do you see how this kerchief skews? What do you suppose makes it skew that way?

DOROTHY. [*Examining it*] Why, I don't see that it does, cousin Lucinda.

COUSIN L. [*Severely*] It skews, Dorothy, and no two ways about it.

DOROTHY. Suppose I were to pin it for you in the back. There, how does that feel?

COUSIN L. [*Turning her head in all directions*] That certainly seems much better. Thank you, Dorothy. It's a bad habit, isn't it?

DOROTHY. Not pinning one's kerchiefs?

COUSIN L. No, I mean this talking to one's self. [*Goes toward chair*] I must try and break myself of it, even at this late day.

Enter ROSA.

ROSA. Miss Dorothy, the tins is all buttered.

DOROTHY. Very well, Rosa. [*Exit ROSA*] I must go to my cake, cousin Lucinda. [*Exit*]

COUSIN L. [*Leaning back in chair, with long-drawn sigh*] One more escape! Now, I must devise something, or I shall certainly betray myself. [*Considers*] I have it! The very thing! *I must be deaf.* Yes, that is just what I must be, and then, if I make any more blunders, before I get used to being somebody else, deafness can account for it. [*Goes to looking-glass and addresses herself, marking words with uplifted knitting needle*] With all else, Lucinda Phelps, you are deaf. Remember that. [*Returns to seat and winds yarn*]

Enter DOROTHY.

DOROTHY. Cousin Lucinda! [*COUSIN L. winds away, apparently not hearing*] Cousin Lucinda!! [*Aside*] Why, I think cousin Lucinda must be deaf. [*Comes up to her chair*] Cousin Lucinda!!!

COUSIN L. [*Looks up quickly and vacantly*] Oh, is it you, Dorothy? [*Gasps*] How you startled me!

DOROTHY. I beg your pardon, cousin Lucinda. I had not noticed before that you were deaf. You are somewhat so, are you not?

COUSIN L. Yes, I believe—I mean, yes I am—a little.

DOROTHY. [*Loudly*] But why didn't you tell me, cousin Lucinda? Here I've been talking in an ordinary tone all morn-

ing, which must have been very annoying. And how exceedingly stupid it must have been for you yesterday. I wonder you made anything at all out of what we said, especially as mother tells us we've fallen into the habit of all talking together.

COUSIN L. Oh, I heard very well yesterday. In fact, I never thought of my deafness till this morning. [*Aside*] That is the only true thing I have said since I came. [*Aloud*] But when I take a little cold I get quite deaf.

DOROTHY. [*Anxiously*] Now, how do you suppose you took cold, cousin Lucinda.

COUSIN L. I don't really know.

DOROTHY. Do you suppose I could have left that window open too much in your room last night?

COUSIN L. Oh, no, it wasn't that, I am sure. I always have a window open. But my deafness is the kind that sort o' steals upon one. There's no accountin' for it at times. I ought to have told you of it before. You remember a little while ago I got sort o' confused about Joshua and Laura? [*D. nods acquiescence*] I might have told you of my deafness then. But you know there are three things that people who are gettin' on in life are slow to acknowledge. One is that their eyesight's failin', another is that they have been asleep during the sermon, and a third is that they're hard o' hearin'.

DOROTHY. [*Laughing*] Well, perhaps that is so. But you must not feel at all uncomfortable about your deafness with us, cousin Lucinda. Aunt Ruby, who was with us last winter, was very deaf indeed. Why, your deafness, Cousin Lucinda, isn't a circumstance to it.

Enter ROSA.

ROSA. Miss Dorothy, the grocery wagon is here.

DOROTHY. Very well, Rosa [*Exit ROSA*] I'll have to leave you again, cousin Lucinda. [*Exit*]

COUSIN L. I don't believe aunt Ruby's deafness ever wore on her the way mine is going to unnerve me. That's the difference between the real article and the sham. But the sham, I think, is going to serve me very well in the carrying out of my little plan. [*A knocking is heard*] Somebody at the outer door. [*Listening*] Whoever it is seems to be coming right in. [*A nearer knock is heard*] Come in.

Enter JANET and ISABEL with books, slates, and small bright tin pails.

JANET. Is Dorothy in? Dorothy Rogers?

COUSIN L. [*Aside, delightedly*] Now is my time to practice. I mustn't lose this opportunity. [*To children*] Are you selling berries?

ISABEL. [*Suppressing laughter*] No, ma'am, we just came to see Dorothy.

COUSIN L. To sell what?

ISABEL. [*Very clearly*] To see Dorothy.

COUSIN L. Speak a little louder, please.

JANET. [*Shouting*] We want to see Dorothy.

Enter DOROTHY, running.

DOROTHY. Oh, you needn't have taken the trouble to go to the door. I heard the little girls knock, but couldn't come right away.

COUSIN L. They've got berries to sell.

ISABEL. Oh, no, we haven't, Dorothy. We just came about our lessons. And that old lady [*Glancing toward C. L., who has taken seat*] is so funny.

DOROTHY. That is my mother's cousin, Miss Phelps, our cousin Lucinda; and I want you both to come and speak to her. You should not laugh because a person cannot hear as well as you. You should be very sorry for anyone. How would you like to be laughed at?

JANET. Oh, Dorothy, we didn't mean anything. You don't think she noticed, do you? I'm going to give her my flowers.

DOROTHY. [*Coming forward with little girls and speaking very clearly*] These are two little friends of mine, cousin Lucinda. It amused them to think you took them for berry girls. These are their lunch pails. But they do go for berries very often, and I dare say they will bring you some, cousin Lucinda, one of these days.

JANET. Yes'm, we shall. And wouldn't you like these flowers? [*Hands flowers to C. L., who takes them and smiles at children*]

DOROTHY. And now, Isabel, what's wrong with the lessons and why have you not been in school these two hours?

ISABEL. We don't have to go to-day until eleven, and we thought we'd come in and ask you about this example. [*Opens book and looks for it*] We've got to have it this afternoon.

DOROTHY. Well, bring the books and slates over here, and we'll see about it. [*All seat themselves, a child on either side of D., who takes book, and is shown example*] [*Reads*] "If a man pays \$15 for seven barrels of apples, what is the price per barrel?" Now, what did I teach you last time?

CHILDREN. [*Sing-song*] "Divide the cost by the quantity to get the price of one."

DOROTHY. Very good. In this example, what is the cost?

CHILDREN. Apples. [*D. shakes her head negatively*]

COUSIN L. Apples! At this season! They mustn't think of eatin' 'em. It isn't safe. That's right, Dorothy, don't you encourage 'em one mite.

DOROTHY. It's only an example, cousin Lucinda. [*Hands book to JANET, who takes same and points out example*]

COUSIN L. [*Peering at example*] Oh, yes, yes, I see.

Enter ROSA.

ROSA. It's a boy with huckleberries and raspberries, Miss Dorothy.

DOROTHY. Very well, Rosa, I'll come out and see him directly.

Exit ROSA.

DOROTHY. As regards berries, what is your choice, cousin Lucinda?

COUSIN L. [*Looking up in great astonishment*] My horse! Why, 'child, I have no horse.

DOROTHY. [*To children who are making efforts to control laughter*] You may both go out on the piazza, and I'll come soon and help you, if you don't get the example yourselves with the help I've just given you.

Exeunt JANET and ISABEL.

COUSIN L. [*As D. comes toward her*] What made you think I had a horse?

DOROTHY. Pardon my not speaking more clearly, cousin Lucinda. I wondered if you had any choice between huckleberries and raspberries. They both grow all about here, you know.

COUSIN L. Dear me, yes, and how good they both sound! Has your mother never told you how we used to go for them in the old mowin'?

DOROTHY. Mother has told us of her going with aunt Laura—

COUSIN L. [*Quickly*] Laura went, too.

DOROTHY. And perhaps about your going, too. You must tell me all about those days, when we find time for some cosy chats together. [*Exit*]

COUSIN L. [*Goes to glass*] Lucinda Phelps, you do very well with your deafness, but your tendency to recall old times is just going to play the mischief with you. [*Returns to seat and winds, looks at letter L., and shakes head sadly*]

Enter DOROTHY.

DOROTHY. Now I've come to stay, Cousin Lucinda. [*Proceeds to get out mending basket*]

COUSIN L. [*Aside*] Which means that I must go. I can never trust myself to stay. No, I must go to my room, stand before my glass, and get used to being Lucinda Phelps. [*Aloud*] I think I'll go and lie down a while, Dorothy. Not very complimentary, after you've just come to stay. But I'm used to resting before dinner.

DOROTHY. By all means, cousin Lucinda. I'll go up to your room with you, for I have a way of arranging windows and shades that makes the room cooler than any other. You must be tired after your journey. Over a hundred miles, isn't it?

COUSIN L. Why, child, it's a good thousand.

DOROTHY. A thousand from Troy!

COUSIN L. [*Recalled to her rôle*] Oh, you mean only from Troy here! I thought, you see—that you meant—that you were referring—to the whole number of miles by the time I get through my trip. You know, I am taking quite a trip. I went first to cousin Malvira's. I was with Malvira near a week, then I went on to—to— aunt Sophronia's for a few days, and from there to cousin Wealthy's and cousin Rebecca's—and—and, why, I certainly stopped somewhere else. Oh, yes, cousin Zarviah's. And some of 'em, you know, took me quite a little out of my way, so that by the time I get all through it will foot up to about a thousand miles.

DOROTHY. [*Who has listened attentively*] How interesting to hear about all these cousins some day when you feel like telling us!

COUSIN L. [*Aside*] I haven't set eyes on any of them for twenty years.

DOROTHY. Pray excuse me, cousin Lucinda. I'll be back in a moment. [*Exit*]

COUSIN L. Deafness isn't going to help me out of this. I believe that things are coming to that pass that I shall have to have lock-jaw!

Re-enter DOROTHY.

DOROTHY. I've been thinking, cousin Lucinda, that perhaps you would rather not go up-stairs. Mother very often rests on the lounge right in that little room. [*Motions to same*] I have closed the blinds, and I think you'll be very comfortable there.

COUSIN L. Thank you, that may be even better. You needn't close the door. I won't wake till I've had my nap out. [*Exit*]

D. goes about putting room in order.

Enter ROSA.

DOROTHY. We must speak quietly, Rosa, Miss Phelps is asleep in the next room.

ROSA. [*In very loud whisper*] Miss Theodora told me I was to put on the best chiny while yer aunt staid.

DOROTHY. Yes, while Miss Phelps and Mrs. Vose are here we shall have everything as nice as possible, Rosa.

ROSA. And will ye tell me what table-cloth, Miss Dorothy?

DOROTHY. I have already laid it out on the dining table, Rosa.

ROSA. And it's yersilf as niver forgets anything, Miss Dorothy. And the finger bowls?

DOROTHY. I'll come and give the finishing touches to the table. You may get it ready as far as you can.

ROSA. I will, Miss. [*Exit*]

Enter MARIE, HESTER and THEODORA, with masses of flowers.

All sink into chairs.

HESTER. The most elegant time!

THEO. Oh, Dorothy, do get off that apron! You look so very *à la cuisine*.

MARIE. She doesn't either. She looks lovely, and what's more, she's probably gotten up a fine dinner for us, and I, for one, am ready to eat it.

HESTER. So am I. Hungry as a bear ! But the most elegant time, Dorothy.

THEO. Aunt Laura is the person to go with.

HESTER. At home or abroad. [*All laugh*]

DOROTHY. But where is aunt Laura ?

MARIE. Gone up-stairs to lie down.

DOROTHY. That reminds me, cousin Lucinda is asleep in the little room.

HESTER. Mercy ! What did you put her in there for ?

THEO. Yes, that room always looks so pretty opening into this, and you have made it as dark as a pocket. How could you, Dorothy ?

HESTER. Sh—sh—sh. She'll hear us. Close the door, somebody.

DOROTHY. No, I don't really think she'll hear, for, do you know, girls, I find cousin Lucinda is quite deaf. Isn't it sad ?

THEO. [*Rising and putting spray of clematis over mirror*] I don't know but what it is rather fortunate for us, considering we have been talking so loudly.

HESTER. [*Looking up from flowers she has been assorting*] Do you know, girls, I think aunt Laura's a trifle deaf. I thought so the time she got so confused about uncle Lemuel's children. She didn't seem to know which was the eldest.

MARIE. And didn't seem to know that Dick was at West Point. Her own brother's family ! It does seem as though she must have known.

DOROTHY. But tell me where you went.

HESTER. We took the south road, and went around by the pond.

DOROTHY. How lovely, and how fortunate ! And how did you find the Morrises ?

HESTER. We didn't stop.

DOROTHY. You didn't stop at the Morrison's, when we've been waiting these two months for a chance to get over there ! Poor Philip ! The only bright spot in his life, he says, is when we come to see him. I should think you might at least have stopped and left him some of those beautiful flowers.

HESTER. When people take you driving, they don't want you doing all sorts of errands. It was fine not to have to stop for anything, but throw dull care away, lean back in luxurious style, and bowl along. [*Rests head on back of chair, and closes eyes*]

THEO. You certainly must go to-morrow, Dorothy.

DOROTHY. I cannot. I shall have my sewing class, you know.

THEO. Oh, bother! Put those infants off, can't you?

DOROTHY. No, I cannot. And besides, I go to the Hastings' to-morrow, so I couldn't go, anyway.

THEO. You certainly can put off reading to Janey Hastings till another week.

DOROTHY. Oh, I couldn't disappoint the poor child, Theo. You know I couldn't. But I think one of you ought to stay at home to-morrow, and urge cousin Lucinda to go.

THEO. It isn't our place to urge her going. Aunt Laura can do that if she wants her.

DOROTHY. It is our place to remember that cousin Lucinda is our guest just as much as aunt Laura.

THEO. By the way, aunt Laura doesn't suspect we saw her letter.

MARIE. She knows that mother got it just before she started, and thinks she took it right on with her.

DOROTHY. It would be quite as well if we did not any of us know. One passes in this world in the long run for just what one is. If you would all be perfectly natural, aunt Laura would think just as well of you. [*Consults watch*] Why, dinner in less than half an hour! I must wake cousin Lucinda. [*Goes to door*] Cousin Lucinda! [*Pauses*] Cousin Lucinda!! [*Pauses*] Cousin Lucinda!!!

HESTER. Well, she *is* deaf, and no mistake.

DOROTHY. I'll go in and put up the shades. [*Exit*]

THEO. And we'll go and put our flowers on the table. [*Exeunt*]

Enter DOROTHY with COUSIN LUCINDA.

DOROTHY. We shall have dinner in about twenty minutes, cousin Lucinda. I hope you rested well.

COUSIN L. [*As though just waked*] It really could not have been more satisfactory. I'll go up now and get ready for dinner.

DOROTHY. And will you be good enough to tell aunt Laura that we dine at one? [*Exit*]

Enter AUNT L. cautiously.

AUNT L. Are you alone, Laura—I mean Lucinda. [*They advance warily, both laughing*] And how have you got on with your little plan?

COUSIN L. [*Viewing the other's dress in wonder*] How have you got on your dress? Why, these tapes were not meant to show. [*Fastens waist belt*] And this hooks here, and this way over here, and the drapery is down full six inches in the back! [*Both laugh as C. L. re-arranges dress*]

AUNT L. [*Desperately*] I didn't know what to do, so I buttoned and hooked everything I saw.

COUSIN L. I should think so.

AUNT L. And how are you getting on with your little plan?

COUSIN L. [*Laughing*] The most dreadful strain I ever was under! I've had to pretend I'm deaf.

AUNT L. So have I.

COUSIN L. Positively, I cannot have more than another day of it.

AUNT L. What, and then tell them?

COUSIN L. Tell them! On no account! But go away suddenly. Dorothy will have the whole thing out of me if I stay.

AUNT L. Dorothy must go driving to-morrow.

COUSIN L. She cannot. I heard her say so when I was *deaf and dumb and blind and asleep* in there. [*Motions toward room*] She has some plan to stay home.

AUNT L. Then you must go, and you can be as deaf as you like. The out-door air can make you even more deaf than the in-door.

COUSIN L. Yes, we must be deaf, and we must sleep, and we must get away from here as soon as possible. Where are those goggles I saw you have yesterday, Lucinda—I mean Laura? If I could have some constant reminder of the part I am playing, I think I could do better.

AUNT L. I have the goggles right here. [*Produces them*] As for me, Laura—Lucinda, I mean, I'm enjoying your plan immensely, now that I'm getting into it. They are really most interesting girls, all of them, and so appreciative. I'm just delighted with Sarah's girls.

Bell rings.

AUNT L. There, the dinner bell!

COUSIN L. Let me put on these goggles. [*Puts them on*]

Exeunt laughing.

CURTAIN.

* ACT IV.

SCENE 1. — *Lawn at the ROGERS'. THEODORA and HESTER in foreground with battledores, playing at shuttlecock. MARIE and DOROTHY at rear arranging table for afternoon tea. Wicker chairs, rugs, cushions, &c., about. Potted plants, shrubbery, &c.*

COSTUMES. — THE MISSES ROGERS, *afternoon dresses in delicate tints with or without hats. MRS. ROGERS, traveling dress; afterward tea gown.*

DOROTHY. [*Looking up suddenly*] Why, there's mother!

HESTER. Mother!

MARIE. You don't say so!

THEO. Why, what has happened?

DOROTHY *rushes out, the rest about following, when enter MRS. R., DOROTHY embracing her.*

THEO. You dear thing [*Kissing her*] But why in the world did you come back so soon?

DOROTHY *has been drawing up easy chair, etc.*

MRS. R. [*Kissing her daughters, and talking somewhat breathlessly*] Why, I began to think if anything should happen to call Laura away before a week, I shouldn't see anything of her for one couldn't tell how long, and you know I've not seen her in fifteen years. Thank you, Dorothy. [*Sinking into chair*] How is she and how is cousin Lucinda? Have they gone out? What are you all looking at one another for? Didn't they come after all?

DOROTHY. Yes, mother, they came.

HESTER. [*Waving her hand oratorically*] They came, they saw, and *we* conquered—at least we hope we did.

MRS. R. What do you mean?

HESTER. That they are come and gone.

MRS. R. Gone!

MARIE. Yes, mother, gone. Yesterday morning.

MRS. R. Yesterday morning! Why, I never heard of such a thing. What do you mean? [*Looks from one to another*] Some-

*Act IV may be given as indoor scene if preferred.

thing must have happened. Now, don't keep anything back. Lucinda was to stay for a month at least, and Laura, for I didn't know how long. It doesn't stand to reason that they should leave after a four days' visit. Now, one at a time; Theodora, you.

THEO. They came that day, mother, as we expected, and everything went on beautifully the whole time they were here. And we supposed, of course, that they were going to stay on indefinitely—

HESTER. Certainly until you got back.

MRS. R. One at a time, Hester.

THEO. But night before last aunt Laura suddenly said, "I find I must leave you to-morrow."

MARIE. You never knew a more surprised lot of people than we.

MRS. R. I cannot understand it at all.

HESTER. Surprised! Why, we were simply dumbfounded.

MRS. R. [*Anxiously*] Laura must have had bad news. Did she get any letters?

THEO. Not that we know of, though they did seem to be referring to some letters?

MRS. R. There is certainly a great mystery about it all. What do you think of it, Dorothy?

DOROTHY. [*Sits herself near MRS. R.*] Why, I was surprised, mother, of course, and I asked them if they could not leave an explanation, for I knew it would seem very strange to you. But aunt Laura said she preferred to write after she got away. Really, mother, I do not feel at all worried, for I know that everything was done for them, and that they enjoyed every moment.

MRS. R. Well, you relieve me greatly.

MARIE. Did you have a good time, mother?

MRS. R. Oh, very nice indeed. But I'm not going to tell anything about my visit until I've heard all about Laura and Lucinda from you.

DOROTHY. But, before we begin our account, mother, you must get out of that dusty traveling dress, and into some easier gown. We are going to have tea out here, and we can all enjoy it together while we give you the fullest description of everything. [*Exeunt MRS. R. and D.*]

MARIE. Say we go in and try our duet, Theo, while we're waiting.

HESTER. Oh, no, Marie. It's too lovely out here. You recite instead what you've promised to give at the lawn party next week. Make believe your audience is there, [*Motions towards actual audience*] and Theo and I will be on this side, so.

THEO. Yes, Marie, do; we've neither of us heard it.

MARIE *gives some *recitation, at end of which* MRS. R. and DOROTHY *enter.*

MRS. R. This was a very good suggestion of yours, Dorothy. I feel much refreshed. [*Seats herself*]

Enter ROSA with tray, etc. ROSA exit.

THEO. *seats herself at table and makes tea. Later on, as it is ready, D. takes some to* MRS. R., *others going for their own, or being handed it.*

DOROTHY. [*As others are seating themselves*] Now, this is going to be very cosy. So nice to have you home again, mother. We're ready now, aren't we, girls, to tell mother about our visitors?

THEO. Our visitors? Say, rather, our mysterious guests.

MRS. R. And now, where shall we begin?

MARIE. At the very beginning, which means, the letter you got from aunt Laura, mother, just before you started. You didn't half read it, you remember. Well, *in that letter*—

THEO. That's right, Marie, work it up sensationally.

MARIE. In that letter aunt Laura stated that one reason of her coming was to form her own opinion of us with a view to taking one or more of us abroad this summer.

MRS. R. You don't mean it! That was in that letter! So your aunt knew you were on dress parade, then.

THEO. No, she didn't, which was the beauty of the thing. You see, mother, aunt Laura meant us not to know of this, and she supposed you had taken the letter right on with you, after you had merely told us she was coming.

MRS. R. Unless I happened to mention it.

THEO. Mention it!

*A song or other music or entertainment may be substituted. See note at end of Act IV.

MARIE. To whom, pray?

MRS. R. To your aunt and cousin.

MARIE. To them!

THEO. Why, when?

DOROTHY. Have you seen them?

HESTER. What do you mean?

MRS. R. In a note I left for them at the station the day they came.

For a moment all look at one another in open-mouthed wonder.

HESTER. Well, they got no such note, for they were just come when we met them, and we all came up together.

THEO. With whom did you leave it, mother?

MRS. R. With the baggage man.

THEO. He forgot it then.

HESTER. And for once I admire his stupidity. You know we've always called him so stupid.

THEO. Oh, he is the stupidest man alive! How fortunate mother left the note with *him*. Anyone else might have delivered it. He wasn't even in sight while we were there.

DOROTHY. He came after you and aunt Laura had gone. I recall now. But he said nothing about any note. I rather wonder, too, for he seemed very attentive and obliging about the baggage.

THEO. "Attentive and obliging"! My dear Dorothy, he never in his life thought of being either.

MRS. R. How is your aunt Laura looking?

THEO. Very well indeed. We didn't any of us remember her.

MARIE. And she doesn't look a bit like her portrait.

HESTER. People never do look like their portraits. Besides, that was painted years and years ago.

MRS. R. What did she say of George, your uncle George?

HESTER. Well, mother, let me tell you first of all that I get my ignorance of the family tree and the various branches thereof direct from aunt Laura.

MRS. R. From your aunt Laura! Why, my dear child, we have always called her the Antiquary. She has kept a genealogical table of the family for years, and has a little book in which everything is written out, the date of birth, marriage, to whom married, and children, with their birthdays.

HESTER. Well, it's safe to say that she's given that all up.

MRS. R. Why, you astonish me! I'm afraid Laura's memory is failing.

MARIE. Oh, I hope not. Especially on this going abroad matter. [*All laugh*]

HESTER. When I asked aunt Laura about uncle George, she said, "I haven't seen very much of him lately." "Why," said I, "I thought he lived near you." "Well, rather near," she said. I thought, mother, he lived next door.

MRS. R. He does.

HESTER. So I said. But auntie seemed a little confused, and said, "Well, not exactly next door. Just around the corner."

MRS. R. Around the corner! Is it possible that George has bought the Fielding place!

HESTER. I don't know, mother, but evidently he is not next door.

MRS. R. [*Delightedly*] Well, well, if George has been able to buy that house! But he deserves it, deserves every bit of his good fortune. To think how he went to Indianapolis a poor boy, began, one might say, at the lowest round of the ladder. But he has built up that business, [*Warming with her theme*] built up that soap business to where it stands to-day—a monument of his industry and devotion. And now comes his reward, he is able to buy that magnificent place.

DOROTHY. But, mother, we don't know that he has bought it.

MRS. R. But, my dear child, wasn't I there this very spring, and don't I know that was the only house about there that was for sale? I remember George's telling me then that he'd rather have it than any place in town. But it's such a magnificent house. Perfectly palatial! And to think George should have bought it and got all moved in, and I never heard of it! And Laura says she doesn't see much of him? There's no estrangement, I hope, nor any misunderstanding. I cannot understand it at all, unless George wanted to write me all about it himself. And your aunt Laura seems quite well, you say.

DOROTHY. She's a little deaf, mother.

MRS. R. Is it possible! Noticeably so?

DOROTHY. Well, no, not if compared with cousin Lucinda.

MRS. R. Is Lucinda then so deaf?

MARIE. Why, mother, her deafness may be said to be something beyond anything. And it really seemed to grow upon her while she was here. Towards the last she hardly heard at all.

THEO. And hardly spoke at all.

MRS. R. [*Shaking her head sadly*] What ravages Time does make !

DOROTHY. But she's ever so nice, mother. And, oh, I must tell you all something, for she said I might, after you came, mother. Cousin Lucinda was in love with Joshua Whiting.

MRS. R. *regards D. as though what she has said is utterly beyond comprehension.*

HESTER AND THEO. With Joshua Whiting !

MARIE. Aunt Laura's lover !

MRS. R. My dear child, [*Goes into paroxysms of laughter*] I never heard anything so amusing. Why, Lucinda must have been in pinafores when he died ! [*All laugh heartily*]

THEO. She couldn't have understood you, Dorothy.

MRS. R. If she's as deaf as you say, I don't wonder she makes mistakes. But really, this is so very amusing. That child in love with Joshua Whiting !

DOROTHY. But aunt Laura wasn't a child, was she ?

MRS. R. No, she was eighteen, perhaps. But Lucinda was some ten or twelve years younger.

DOROTHY. Aunt Laura isn't older than cousin Lucinda.

MRS. R. Why, to be sure she is, some dozen years.

THEO. Is it possible ?

MARIE. I must say I never was more surprised in my life.

HESTER. [*Stoutly*] I'm not ; I'm not a bit surprised. There is aunt Laura with her fat pocketbook always living on the best the land affords, going here and there and everywhere ; why should she grow old ?

MRS. R. Cousin Lucinda then looks much older ?

DOROTHY. She is quite gray, mother, and has something of a stoop. Her eyes are weak, too. She wears goggles right in the house !

MRS. R. [*Shaking her head*] What ravages Time does make. I suppose your aunt Laura dressed beautifully.

THEO. Her gowns were very handsome, that is, the materials were rich ; but as for fitting her — [*Shrugs*]

HESTER. As for fitting her — *they didn't!*

MARIE. They were all awkward looking. I think they must have been made by old measurements. Her dresses were all too long in front, I thought.

HESTER. [*Rises and sets down cup*]. Did you, now? I rather liked that effect, myself, and I mean to let all mine down at once. [*Takes hold of her skirt*] All our dresses, I noticed, looked so bobby in front, compared with aunt Laura's. It is evidently the proper thing, mother, to stumble around in one's skirts. *That* I made a note of.

MRS. R. Did aunt Laura bring a maid?

MARIE. No, but she really needed one to help her dress, for she would hook hooks and tie tapes without any sort of method.

THEO. Then, too, she didn't arrange her hair right for any of her five bonnets, and if you can believe it, she wore a little old bonnet of cousin Lucinda's the whole time, even to the day she went away!

HESTER. And how they both laughed over it!

MARIE. Over that and over lots of things. I used to hear them giggling like school girls after they went up at night. Their rooms connected, you know.

MRS. R. Lucinda was always a great laugher.

MARIE. Oh, it wasn't cousin Lucinda as much as aunt Laura. I could hear aunt Laura's voice distinctly.

THEO. Really, mother, for a woman who has spent the time abroad that aunt Laura has, she gives the least evidence of it of any person I ever knew.

HESTER. Oh, I think some people look upon that as the proper thing to do. Rather ignore their having been abroad. That was why I adopted the plan of drawing aunt Laura out.

MARIE. Yes, mother, Hester used to do all the talking, and aunt Laura was as much interested as though Hester had been abroad, and she herself hadn't.

HESTER. That was where she showed her excellent breeding. Aunt Laura is an admirable listener.

MARIE. I only hope for your sake, Hester, that you haven't shown yourself so well-informed that aunt Laura will think you don't need the trip.

HESTER. [*In mock concern*] Oh, I hope not.

MRS. R. [*Goes toward table and sets down cup*] Dear me, your observations are amusing enough for a play.

THEO. Oh, we feel like a play. We have all been taking parts—all except Dorothy.

MRS. R. *has been looking about as though in search of something.*

DOROTHY. What are you looking for, mother?

MRS. R. My hand bag.

DOROTHY. I took it in the house. Let me get it. [*Exit*]

MRS. R. I brought some old photographs that they had at cousin Zekiel's. I thought Laura and Lucinda would be here, and that we'd enjoy looking them over.

Enter D., who hands bag to MRS. R.

MRS. R. [*Opening bag and taking out package of pictures*] There [*Selecting one*] is a group of Ezekiel's children.

Four girls stand looking at photograph.

THEO. Aren't they cunning!

MARIE. This must be Harry.

HESTER. Isn't he sweet!

DOROTHY. Do let's send for them all.

THEO. O, Dorothy, what a bore!

HESTER. They'd be tagging us about the whole time.

DOROTHY. Some of them will come this summer, won't they, mother?

MRS. R. I urged them, but they cannot tell yet.

HESTER. Oh, have them if you want to! They won't bother me, for I expect to be [*Sings*] "Sailing, sailing over the bounding main."

MRS. R. [*Handing another picture*] There's one of aunt Laura.

HESTER. Cousin Lucinda, you mean. Isn't that good, girls?

MRS. R. Is that Lucinda's? [*Looks over remaining photographs*] Well, there are one or two of Laura here.

THEO. How pretty cousin Lucinda was!

MARIE. [*Taking a photo from MRS. R.'s lap*] Here's one of aunt Laura.

ALL. Lovely!

MRS. R. Why, I laid that aside thinking it was Cindy's. Have I put the wrong names on those, I wonder?

THEO. [*Consults back of photo*] Yes, mother, you have. You've written 'Laura' on this.

HESTER. And 'Lucinda' on aunt Laura's.

MRS. R. Dear me, that comes of not having had on my glasses.

DOROTHY. They can be changed very easily, mother. You've written the names very lightly.

MARIE. [*Opens a daguerreotype case*] Oh, here is a lovely one of cousin Lucinda! [*Shows it to others*]

DOROTHY. How pretty she was!

HESTER. And her pose, really queenly, isn't it?

THEO. Those flowing sleeves! Aren't they funny?

MARIE. But they are coming in again, they say.

MRS. R. [*Who has been gazing at her daughters in growing astonishment*] Dorothy Rogers, [*In measured tones*] will you go into the house and bring me my glasses this very moment.

Exit D., to re-enter with glasses; others, meanwhile, continuing to look at daguerreotype.

Enter ROSA.

ROSA. The letters, miss. [*To HESTER, who takes them*]

HESTER. What lots of letters! There must be one from aunt Laura. There is! [*Waves it delightedly*]

MRS. R. [*Looking for daguerreotype*] Where is that daguerreotype you call cousin Lucinda?

HESTER. Oh, mother, don't stop to look at those pictures now.

MARIE. We must hear what aunt Laura says.

MRS. R. ROGERS *is borne off to large chair and seated. She takes letters and looks them over, daughters gathered about her.*

HESTER. O, mother, how can you look over those letters when we're so impatient!

MRS. R. [*Designating one*] That's from George. I do so wonder if he's bought the Fielding place. And that's from one of Margaret's children; Lucy, I reckon. Getting to be quite a nice writer, isn't she?

THEO. Mother, how *can* you, when we're just dying of curiosity!

HESTER AND MARIE. Do open Aunt Laura's.

MRS. R. *breaks seal. Four girls take hold of one another theatrically.*

THEO. Isn't it like a play!

MRS. R. *takes out letter and reads to self smilingly.*

MARIE. Mother, aren't you going to read it out?

MRS. R. In a moment, dear. [*Reads on to self*]

HESTER. [*Gets stool and places it in front of MRS. R., mounts same, and waves hand at MRS. R.*] Mother, mother, were you ever on tip-toe with curiosity? Oh, you have been. Well, we're just tip-top-toe. [*Raising herself up*] Do tell us what aunt Laura says.

MRS. R. Yes, yes, child, but do get down, you make me dizzy. No, [*Glancing over sheets*] she doesn't seem to have mentioned George at all, nor the Fielding place.

HESTER. Oh, mother, never mind that! What's that Fielding place to going abroad, and perhaps seeing the real old Fielding place?

MRS. R. Well, well, child, I'll begin now at the beginning. [*Reads*] [*Others gathered about*]

"My dear Sally:—

You will, of course, be surprised at hearing of my sudden departure." [*Pauses*] Is that 'departure' I wonder?

THEO. Oh, yes, mother, it must be! Don't stop now.

MRS. R. I think it is 'departure.'

HESTER. Why, I know it is, mother, without looking.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "My sudden departure from your house, bearing Lucinda with me. But, before my letter is finished, everything will be clear to you. Let me say right here that we had a most delightful visit, and that we think you have every reason to be proud of your bright and lovely daughters." [*Girls all curtsy to one another*] "I propose going abroad in about three weeks." [*Pauses*] Let me see, that will be the—to-day is the what?

HESTER. [*Hopelessly*] I don't know what by the calendar, but I think it must be the longest day in the year.

MRS. R. Well, we'll find that out afterwards. [*Reads*] "In about three weeks, to be gone a year." That's longer than Laura usually stays. Let me see, last time, no, the time before, or was it even the time before that?—

HESTER *sinks into chair with long-drawn sigh.*

MRS. R. Oh, yes, child, I'll go right on. [*Reads*] "We shall visit ——"

CHORUS. Does she really say "we"?

MRS. R. She does indeed. [*Reads*] "We shall visit Liverpool, Chester and London. Go down to Brighton for a fortnight. Cross to Dieppe, visiting Rouen, and thence to Paris—" Shan't we get a map, girls, and look auntie's route all out as we read?

HESTER. A map! Look out routes at this thrilling juncture! Why, mother, do go right on as fast as ever you can.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "Go down to Brighton——"

HESTER. We've just been to Brighton and spent a fortnight, mother. Don't go back there!

DOROTHY. "Paris" was the last word, mother.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "How long we shall remain in Paris, I do not know."

HESTER. Six months, if I have anything to say about it.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "Then to Geneva for a few weeks."

MARIE. [*Clasping hands and throwing up her eyes*] Geneva!

THEO. Don't say Geneva, Marie. That position calls at least for *Genève*.

MARIE. Je never may be even better. [*All laugh*]

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "From there to Chamonix, and down the Rhine to Cologne."

MARIE. [*Enthusiastically*] Down the Rhine!

THEO. Why, of course, Marie. Did you expect to go down the Hudson?

MARIE. To be frank with you, I don't know but what the Hudson *is* as near as I shall ever get to the Rhine.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "From Cologne to Brussels, Brussels to—" [*Hunts for another sheet*] "Brussels to—" [*Takes up sheet*] "Cardigan."

DOROTHY. Cardigan! Where is that, I wonder?

MRS. R.. Now, you see we ought to have a map, and look these places right up as we read. That was what I proposed at the very beginning.

HESTER. A map! Why, mother, the idea of taking the time? Everybody knows where Cardigan is. Right along there by Brussels. I'll promise to get a map, and look it out for you the very minute you get through that letter.

MRS. R. [*Regarding sheet*] Why, this doesn't come next at all. That's a list [*Laying it aside*] of things you'll need on the steamer.

THEO. You?

HESTER. Who?

DOROTHY. Which one, mother?

MARIE. Then one of us surely is going. [*All clasp one another, waltz, and strike attitudes*]

THEO. Yes, and Hester has promised to find us Cardigan on the map. That will be a treat in itself.

HESTER. Do go on, mother.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "Brussels to Antwerp, then to Holland, and back to England for some months; in fact, until we are ready to sail for America." Well, [*Lays down letter*] what a trip Laura has planned.

HESTER. [*Naïvely*] That isn't the end of the letter, is it, mother?

MRS. R. Oh, no, there's a whole sheet after this. [*Finds place*] [*Reads*] "And now, my dear Sally, will you lend me—" [*Looks among other sheets for connection*] To think of Laura's borrowing from *me*! What can she want of my belongings, I wonder? Though you do tell me she wore Lucinda's things. "Cardigan" can't fit in here, can it? She certainly wouldn't want that worsted jacket of mine, my old cardigan, would she? [*Girls shake their heads negatively*]. Oh, hear it is. [*Reads*] "Will you lend me for a year." Why here the whole thing is right out. [*Reads*] "Will you lend me, for a year, your sweet Dorothy?"

HESTER AND MARIE. What!

DOROTHY AND THEO. Sweet who!

M., T. AND H. [*One after the other*] Dorothy! Dorothy!! Dorothy!!! [*Hastening to look at letter*]

DOROTHY. Me! Why, mother, it cannot be I.

MARIE. It certainly is. There's no mistaking it.

M., T. and H. gaze at one another in amazement.

MRS. R. And isn't anybody going to think to congratulate Dorothy? [*Embraces her, as both come forward*] Dorothy, my dear, I'm delighted for you.

HESTER. Oh, yes, Dorothy, dear. [*Embracing her*] It's lovely, perfectly lovely. But somehow it has come so awfully unexpected, don't you see,

DOROTHY. I know it. I really wish it were one of you. For, [To MRS. R.] you see, mother, I haven't set my heart on going at all, and the others have all been counting on it so. Someway I cannot believe yet that aunt Laura means me.

HESTER. Well, I don't give it up yet. Perhaps some of the rest of us are going, too. Dorothy Rogers, [*Shakes D. playfully*] what did you do to aunt Laura when she was here? Speak now. You threw some charm over her, you know you did, you naughty, good-for-everything girl, you! [*Kisses her*] You deserve to go, Dorothy, dear. Doesn't she, Theo?

THEO. [*Taking D's hand*] Indeed she does.

MARIE. We've always said that Dorothy was good as gold.

DOROTHY. But, mother, I cannot get over the surprise of it. And then I could never get ready to go in three weeks.

MRS. R. Oh, we can get you ready, my dear. But first let us see what aunt Laura wants you to take. [*Sets herself and consults letter*] [*Reads*] "Do not refuse me, I beg, nor think three weeks short notice, for she can easily get ready. I should like her to take a wool dress, some pretty gray, for instance, or else a black silk." How like Laura that is! She never turned about but what she bought a black silk. [*Reads*] "And some rather dressy gown, a silk and cashmere of any color that is becoming."

DOROTHY. Aunt Laura talks as though we could go out and pick these things off of bushes.

THEO. She evidently doesn't know the trials of getting things made in the country.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "I would suggest that Dorothy run into Boston and have these things made."

DOROTHY. What! All new dresses! Why, I never could do it in the world. It would take two hundred dollars, at least. Now, I can sponge off my black silk and make it over as good as new, and my blue flannel is just the thing to take for traveling, and then I have my garnet surah.

MARIE. Aunt Laura saw all those creations, my dear, and evidently counted them as nothing.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "And now I want to explain my hasty departure from your house. The fact is, I could not stay longer, nor could Lucinda, for we were each playing a part, and we felt it unfair."

HESTER. Playing a part!

DOROTHY. What does she mean?

THEO. Why, that's just what we said we were doing!

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "When your note at the station told me you had left my letter with my nieces——"

HESTER. [*Gasping*] What!

THEO. She knew it, then!

MARIE. That dreadful note!

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "I recognized that my plan of judging them could not be carried out, so I resolved upon an expedient. Lucinda Phelps had just arrived. The trains were that day changed. I saw we had time to go over to that little hotel, exchange our dresses and outer belongings, and each become the other." [*Girls' faces begin to wear most amazed expressions*] "We returned to the station, I, apparently Lucinda Phelps; she, apparently Laura Vose. It was thus that my nieces met us."

MARIE. They changed their things!

HESTER. Cousin Lucinda was really aunt Laura!

THEO. Aunt Laura was really cousin Lucinda!

DOROTHY. Can it be possible!

HESTER. Yes, it is possible. I see now, that is just what they did.

THEO. It was an awfully mean thing to do, that's all I can say, and I don't wonder they left.

HESTER. We may as well have the rest of the letter, I suppose.

MRS. R. [*Reads*] "I never did anything of the kind before, and I never mean to again. I feel that my nieces will think hardly of me, and that in a way I owe them an apology. But, had they been in my place, would they not have been tempted to do as I did? I ask that we all let bygones be bygones and that you and your three daughters do me the honor of spending the week before we sail with Dorothy and me in New York. I have engaged rooms at the *—, and Lucinda promises to come, too."

MARIE. [*Pouting*] I've a mind not to go a step.

THEO. How foolish of you, Marie. Why, let us all go, and have the jolliest sort of a time the last week Dorothy is with us. Don't you say so, mother? [*Mrs. R. nods acquiescence*]

* Mention most fashionable hotel.

HESTER. Yes, I should have done just as they did, now that I come to think it over. Besides, we did not hesitate to deceive aunt Laura. Have we any right to take her to task for deceiving us? For my part, I forgive aunt Laura, I mean cousin Lucinda, I don't quite know whom I do mean. But, whoever it is, I forgive her with all my heart. Do look at mother laugh, will you.

MRS. R. [*Convulsed with laughter*] Oh, dear me, dear me! Now I begin to see so many things. It's all clear now about your uncle George. And to think you didn't know them apart!

MARIE. No, mother, we never even suspected.

HESTER. It was strange, too, that we didn't. the more I come to think it over. I see now why aunt Laura was so shy of her foreign experiences.

THEO. And why cousin Lucinda's bonnet was so well adapted to her own head.

DOROTHY. And why cousin Lucinda's deafness grew on her so.

MARIE. And why those dresses were such a problem.

HESTER. I don't believe, girls, that I'll let down my dresses in front after all. It's more convenient to have one's feet ready for use. [*All laugh*] No, I shan't do anything to my wardrobe, though you needn't be surprised if I go into sack-cloth for a season.

MRS. R. I thought if Lucinda were giving it out that she had been in love with Joshua Whiting! And then those photographs. Why, when you were all taking that one of Laura to be Cindy, I didn't know but that I might be losing my reason.

HESTER. What's this? [*Picks up thin slip of paper from under MRS. R.'s chair*] Why, look here. [*Comes forward*] Everybody listen. [*Reads*] "Franklin Bank, New York City. Pay to the order of Dorothy Rogers." [*Aside*] I fancy we shall be able to get Dorothy off, after all. [*Aloud*] [*Reads*] "Pay to the order of Dorothy Rogers five hundred dollars."

OTHERS. [*Who have been coming forward, and are now grouped about HESTER*] You don't mean it!

HESTER. [*Reads*] "Signed, 'Laura Worthington Vose.'"

ALL. Which makes it as "Good as Gold."

CURTAIN.

NOTES.

NOTE A.—A seminary in Maine arranged an interlude which provides that the stage shall be occupied by the porter alone during absence of Mrs. V. and Miss P. This monologue was purchased and a type written copy will be loaned to applicants for 25 cents. Address the author of the play.

NOTE B.—The following is part of a letter from some amateurs who thus interpreted Act II.

The R. R. station was supposed by us to be a lively scene. Bags, trunks, suit-cases, etc., etc. A great variety of people in all sorts of humor. Trains late and too early. Some students arrayed as college men created a diversion by original dialogue, singing college songs, etc., which introduced the Italians. A little child of six dressed in Roman peasant costume was among the strolling band. With her tambourine she collected money after each song, dropping a curtsy and jingling the coins in true Italian fashion. Very amusing and pretty. A Hawaiian girl sang charmingly some native airs and another young girl sang delightfully in Italian.

NOTE C.—Male characters have also been introduced in this R. R. station scene as travelers, ticket agent, news boy, boot black, etc., etc.

NOTE D.—If preferred that the *Dramatis Personae* shall consist of female characters only, the baggage-man may be eliminated in the following manner: All talk with him is supposed to take place in some other part of the station. Mrs. V. will say, "Strange there is no one here to meet us." Adding, "There goes the porter. I must see him." She will then soon return saying, "The porter has just handed me this note, etc., etc." All talk of fees is of course omitted. Dorothy later will say: "I have seen the baggage-man and he says your bag, etc." The Act then ends with the going of Dorothy and Cousin Lucinda, curtain falling as they leave the station.

NOTE E.—Another way of arranging Act II is to make two scenes of it. The curtain to fall as Mrs. V. and Miss P. start for 'the little hotel across the way'; and to rise again as they return in exchanged apparel. This arrangement does away with any interlude.

NOTE F.—Act IV may be shortened if desired, by Mrs. Rogers remaining on the stage in traveling dress. In this case the recitation is omitted, as is also all talk pertaining to it and to Mrs. Rogers' change of dress.

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